

VZCZCXYZ0005
RR RUEHWEB

DE RUEHLI #1324 1581332
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
R 061332Z JUN 08
FM AMEMBASSY LISBON
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 6868
RUEHC/DEPT OF LABOR WASHDC

UNCLAS LISBON 001324

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR DRL/ILCSR (MITTELHAUSER), G/TIP (STEINER),
AND DOL/ILAB (RIGBY)

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [ELAB](#) [ETRD](#) [PHUM](#) [SOCI](#) [PO](#)

SUBJECT: PORTUGAL REPLY ON FORCED LABOR AND CHILD LABOR
REPORT

REF: SECSTATE 41381

Overview and Background

¶1. There is no credible evidence that child labor or forced labor is being used in the production of goods, according to Joaquina Cadete, Director of the Prevention and Elimination of Child Labor Program (PETI) in the Ministry of Labor (MOL). Cadete stated that Portugal does not have an organized use of child labor in any sector. Joao Gois from ILO in Lisbon agreed, stating that child labor is not considered a problem by ILO in Portugal.

Current State of Play

¶2. A decade ago, Portugal was one of the only Western European nations with a significant child labor force, but that is no longer the case. The main explanation, Cadete said, is that public perception has evolved and underage labor (younger than 16) is no longer viewed as socially acceptable. In 2006, PETI reported that an estimated 126 children were working in the "worst forms of child labor," including drug trafficking, prostitution, and pornography. PETI is the government entity responsible for addressing such cases, as well as those that involve children working in family businesses. Cadete noted that PETI also monitors children who are at risk of dropping out and working while underage. PETI does not track foreign minors living in Portugal and acknowledges that some foreign children, particularly Roma, work as beggars in cities. The Ministry of Labor's Inspector General for Work Safety reports much lower numbers than PETI (only five children employed in 2006), but both organizations agree that forced labor and child labor in the production of goods is no longer a problem in Portugal. As administrative entities, both PETI and the Inspector General's office pass cases to the Ministry of Internal Administration for legal action in cases of forced labor or trafficking.

¶3. The only recent case of alleged child labor in the production of goods was reported in June 2006. According to press reports, Zara, a Spanish-owned fashion company, had employed two Portuguese children to sew shoes by hand. After an internal investigation, the company announced that it did not condone the practice and that the boys had been pressed into employment by their family unbeknownst to the company. Ballard